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Serial No. 09/688,170

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An aiming device for aiming and visually indicating a reading area of a coded information reader, comprising:

means for emitting a light beam;

~~means~~ a refractive optical element for splitting the light beam into at least two different beam portions active on at least two different zones of a reading area of a coded information reader along at least two different optical paths;

wherein ~~the means for splitting the light beam consists of a~~ the refractive optical element comprises at least two different surface portions which simultaneously collect the emitted light beam and which simultaneously project said at least two different beam portions onto said at least two different zones of the reading area.

2. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 1, further comprising means for collimating the light beam.

3. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 1, wherein said means for emitting a light beam comprises a LED emitting a light beam.

4. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 1, wherein the refractive optical element comprises first and second opposed faces for respectively collecting the light beam and projecting the at least two beam portions on the reading area, wherein an optical axis Z is defined into the refractive optical element and the second face comprises at least one first surface portion inclined by a predetermined angle α with respect to the first face and adapted to deflect the at least one first portion of light beam by a predetermined deflection angle β with respect to the optical axis Z.

5. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 4, wherein the second face

OLIVA
Serial No. 09/688,170

comprises two first surface portions, each of the two first surface portions being inclined by a predetermined angle with respect to the first face and adapted to deflect a corresponding portion of the light beam by a predetermined deflection angle with respect to the optical axis Z.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 1, wherein the refractive optical element comprises means for transmitting without any deflection a second portion of the light beam towards the reading area.

8. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 7, wherein the means for transmitting without any deflection the second portion of the light beam towards the reading area is provided centrally in the refractive optical element.

9. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 4, wherein the refractive optical element comprises means for transmitting without any deflection a second portion of the light beam towards the reading area, and wherein the second face comprises at least one second surface portion which is substantially flat and parallel to the first face for collecting the light beam, the at least one second surface portion forming the means for transmitting without any deflection the at least one second portion of light beam towards the reading area.

10. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 4, wherein the refractive optical element comprises means for transmitting without any deflection a second portion of the light beam towards the reading area, and wherein said refractive optical element comprises a through hole extended between the first and second faces and coaxially formed with respect to the optical axis Z, the through hole forming the means for transmitting without any deflection the at least one second portion of light beam towards the reading area.

OLIVA
Serial No. 09/688,170

11. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 1, wherein the refractive optical element has a cross section smaller than that of the light beam.

12. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 4, further comprising means for collimating the light beam, wherein the collimation means comprises a collimation lens fixedly associated with the refractive optical element at the first face for collecting the light beam.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 1, further comprising an amplitude mask adapted to impart a predetermined profile to the at least two different beam portions.

15. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 14, further comprising means for collimating the light beam wherein the amplitude mask is arranged between the collimation means and the refractive optical element.

16. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 4, wherein the at least one first inclined surface portion of the refractive optical element is substantially planar.

17. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 4, wherein the at least one first inclined surface portion of the refractive optical element is substantially cylindrical and convex.

18. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 17, comprising at least one diverging lens arranged upstream of the refractive optical element in correspondence to the at least one first inclined surface portion.

19. (Currently Amended) An optical element for aiming and visually indicating a reading area of a coded information reader, comprising means for splitting light beam into at least two beam portions adapted to be projected on at least two different zones of a reading area along at least two different optical paths, wherein the optical element is a

OLIVA
Serial No. 09/688,170

refractive optical element comprising at least two different surface portions which simultaneously collect the emitted light beam and which simultaneously project said at least two different beam portions onto said at least two different zones of the reading area.

20. (Currently Amended) An optical apparatus for reading information in a reading area, the optical apparatus comprising an aiming device, the aiming device having:

an emitter which emits a light beam;

~~an~~ a refractive optical element which splits the light beam into at least two different beam portions active on at least two different zones of a reading area of the optical apparatus along at least two different optical paths, wherein the refractive optical element consists of a refractive optical element comprises at least two different surface portions which simultaneously collect the emitted light beam and which simultaneously project said at least two different beam portions onto said at least two different zones of the reading area.

21. (Currently Amended) An aiming device for aiming and visually indicating a reading area of an optical apparatus, the aiming device comprising:

an emitter which emits a light beam;

~~an~~ a refractive optical element which splits the light beam into at least two different beam portions active on at least two different zones of the reading area of the optical apparatus along at least two different optical paths, wherein the optical element consists of a refractive optical element comprises at least two different surface portions which simultaneously collect the emitted light beam and which simultaneously project said at least two different beam portions onto said at least two different zones of the reading area.

22. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 21, wherein the refractive

OLIVA
Serial No. 09/688,170

optical element comprises first and second opposed faces for respectively collecting the light beam and projecting the at least two beam portions on the reading area, wherein an optical axis Z is defined into the refractive optical element and the second face comprises at least one first surface portion inclined by a predetermined angle α with respect to the first face and adapted to deflect the at least one first portion of light beam by a predetermined deflection angle β with respect to the optical axis Z.

23. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 22, wherein the second face comprises two surface portions, each one inclined by a predetermined angle with respect to the first face and adapted to deflect a corresponding portion of the light beam by a predetermined deflection angle with respect to the optical axis Z.

24. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 22, wherein said second face comprises four first surface portions, each of the four first surface portions being inclined by a predetermined angle with respect to the first face and adapted to deflect a corresponding portion of the light beam by a predetermined deflection angle with respect to the optical axis Z, so as to define, in the refractive optical element, a poly-prismatic structure having a substantially pyramidal shape with a rhomboidal base.

25. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 21, wherein the refractive optical element also comprises means for transmitting without any deflection a second portion of the light beam towards the reading area.

26. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 25, wherein the means for transmitting without any deflection the second portion of the light beam towards the reading area is provided centrally in the refractive optical element.

27. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 21, wherein the refractive optical element has a cross section smaller than that of the light beam.

28. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 22, wherein the second face comprises at least one first peripheral surface portion inclined by a predetermined angle

OLIVA
Serial No. 09/688,170

α_1 with respect to the first face and adapted to deflect the at least one first portion of light beam by a predetermined deflection angle β_1 with respect to the optical axis Z, and at least one second surface portion proximate a center of the second face, the at least one second surface portion being inclined by a predetermined angle α_2 different from α_1 , with respect to the first face and adapted to deflect the at least one portion of light beam by a predetermined deflection angle β_2 , different from β_1 , with respect to the optical axis Z.

29. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 21, further comprising an amplitude mask adapted to impart a predetermined profile to the at least two different beam portions.

30. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 22, wherein the at least one first inclined surface portion of the refractive optical element is substantially planar.

31. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 22, wherein the at least one first inclined surface portion of the refractive optical element is substantially cylindrical and convex.

32. (Previously Presented) A device according to claim 31, comprising at least one diverging lens arranged upstream of the refractive optical element in correspondence to the at least one first inclined surface portion.

33. (Previously Presented) An aiming device for aiming and visually indicating a reading area of a coded information reader, comprising:

- means for emitting a light beam;
- means for deflecting at least one first portion of the light beam so as to generate at least two different beam portions active on at least two different zones of a reading area of a coded information reader along at least two different optical paths;
- wherein the means for deflecting at least one portion of the light beam consists of a refractive optical element;

OLIVA
Serial No. 09/688,170

wherein the refractive optical element comprises first and second opposed faces for respectively collecting the light beam and projecting the at least two beam portions on the reading area, wherein an optical axis Z is defined into the refractive optical element;

wherein said second face comprises four first surface portions, each of the four first surface portions being inclined by a predetermined angle with respect to the first face and adapted to deflect a corresponding portion of the light beam by a predetermined deflection angle with respect to the optical axis Z, so as to define, in the refractive optical element, a poly-prismatic structure having a substantially pyramidal shape with a rhomboidal base.

34. (Previously Presented) An aiming device for aiming and visually indicating a reading area of a coded information reader, comprising:

means for emitting a light beam;

means for deflecting at least one first portion of the light beam so as to generate at least two different beam portions active on at least two different zones of a reading area of a coded information reader along at least two different optical paths;

wherein the means for deflecting at least one portion of the light beam consists of a refractive optical element;

wherein the refractive optical element comprises first and second opposed faces for respectively collecting the light beam and projecting the at least two beam portions on the reading area, wherein an optical axis Z is defined into the refractive optical element;

wherein the second face comprises at least one first peripheral surface portion inclined by a predetermined angle α_1 with respect to the first face and adapted to deflect the at least one first portion of light beam by a predetermined deflection angle β_1 with respect to the optical axis Z, and at least one second surface portion proximate a center of the second face, the at least one second surface portion being inclined by a predetermined angle α_2 different from α_1 , with respect to the first face and adapted to deflect the at least one portion of light beam by a predetermined deflection angle β_2 , different from β_1 , with respect to the optical axis Z.

OLIVA
Serial No. 09/688,170

35. (New) An aiming device for aiming and visually indicating a reading area of an optical apparatus, the aiming device comprising:

an emitter which emits a light beam;

an optical element which splits the light beam into at least two different beam portions active on at least two different zones of the reading area of the optical apparatus along at least two different optical paths, wherein the optical element consists of a refractive optical element;

wherein the refractive optical element comprises first and second opposed faces for respectively collecting the light beam and projecting the at least two beam portions on the reading area, wherein an optical axis Z is defined into the refractive optical element and the second face comprises at least one first surface portion inclined by a predetermined angle α with respect to the first face and adapted to deflect the at least one first portion of light beam by a predetermined deflection angle β with respect to the optical axis Z;

wherein said second face comprises four first surface portions, each of the four first surface portions being inclined by a predetermined angle with respect to the first face and adapted to deflect a corresponding portion of the light beam by a predetermined deflection angle with respect to the optical axis Z, so as to define, in the refractive optical element, a poly-prismatic structure having a substantially pyramidal shape with a rhomboidal base.

36. (New) An aiming device for aiming and visually indicating a reading area of an optical apparatus, the aiming device comprising:

an emitter which emits a light beam;

an optical element which splits the light beam into at least two different beam portions active on at least two different zones of the reading area of the optical apparatus

OLIVA
Serial No. 09/688,170

along at least two different optical paths, wherein the optical element consists of a refractive optical element;

wherein the refractive optical element comprises first and second opposed faces for respectively collecting the light beam and projecting the at least two beam portions on the reading area, wherein an optical axis Z is defined into the refractive optical element and the second face comprises at least one first surface portion inclined by a predetermined angle α with respect to the first face and adapted to deflect the at least one first portion of light beam by a predetermined deflection angle β with respect to the optical axis Z;

wherein the second face comprises at least one first peripheral surface portion inclined by a predetermined angle α_1 with respect to the first face and adapted to deflect the at least one first portion of light beam by a predetermined deflection angle β_1 with respect to the optical axis Z, and at least one second surface portion proximate a center of the second face, the at least one second surface portion being inclined by a predetermined angle α_2 different from α_1 , with respect to the first face and adapted to deflect the at least one portion of light beam by a predetermined deflection angle β_2 , different from β_1 , with respect to the optical axis Z.